

Charting the Impact of 50 Years: Federal Child Support Services

For five decades, the federal Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) has empowered families by securing financial support and promoting responsible parenting. This graphic highlights select milestones, illustrating its transformational journey from enforcement-focused beginnings to a holistic approach toward family self-sufficiency.

1975

Establishment of the Child Support Enforcement Program: The program was established as Title IV-D of the Social Security Act in 1975 to ensure children receive financial support from their parents. ([Source](#))

1981

Federal Income Tax Refund Offset Program: Authorized to intercept tax refunds to pay overdue child support. ([Source](#))

1984

Child Support Amendments: Required states to establish expedited processes for paternity and support order establishment, created the first Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS), and introduced income withholding as a standard enforcement tool. ([Source](#))

1988

Family Support Act: Required state programs to implement automated systems for child support enforcement. ([Source](#))

1996

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA): Marked a major transformation of child support enforcement by emphasizing automation, including the establishment of the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) and strengthening of enforcement mechanisms. ([Source](#))

1998

Mandatory State Disbursement Units (SDUs): Required centralized collection and distribution of payments for states under PRWORA. ([Source](#))

2004

Tribal Child Support Programs Recognized: Final regulations (45 CFR 310) were published, allowing tribes to apply for start-up financing and become eligible to receive 100% federal funding for two years. ([Source](#))

2006

Deficit Reduction Act of 2005: Increased the amount of child support money that states can pass on to children who are receiving or were previously receiving welfare. ([Source](#))

2010

Claims Resolution Act: Introduced a definition of "newly hired employee" for the purposes of the NDNH that encompasses both certain rehired employees and personnel who had never worked for the company before. ([Source](#))

2016

Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Programs Final Rule: Federal regulations were updated to improve fairness in setting support orders, especially for low-income parents, and to reduce barriers to compliance. ([Source](#))

2023

Name Change to Office of Child Support Services (OCSS): Reflecting its expanded role, the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) was renamed to better represent its mission of supporting all families, not just enforcing orders. ([Source](#))

2025

50th Anniversary Celebration: Honoring five decades of service in strengthening families and improving the lives of children through innovative child support services.